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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

SAVA 73-58

16 April 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Henry A. Kissinger  
Assistant to the President for  
National Security Affairs

SUBJECT : The Status of Military Forces in Laos

1. Attached for your information is a memorandum entitled, "The Current Status of Military Forces in Laos." In essence, it is a companion piece to our earlier study on "The Balance of Military Forces in South Vietnam" (March 1973, [REDACTED]). The key judgments of the Laos study are set forth on its first page.

2. At this writing, you, General Scowcroft and Mr. Kennedy are the only recipients of the Laos study. If you so desire, we will distribute it to the other WSAG principals.

George A. Carver, Jr.  
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment

Copy No. 1

Copy No. 2 - General Scowcroft  
Copy No. 3 - Mr. Kennedy

Copy No. 3 - Mr. Kennedy

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

18 April 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Elliot L. Richardson  
The Secretary of Defense

SUBJECT : The Balance of Military Forces in Laos

1. Attached for your information is a report on the current status of military forces in Laos, which we prepared for Dr. Kissinger.

2. At Dr. Kissinger's request we are sending copies of this report to the WSAG principals and to the recipients of the weekly CIA/DOD report on Communist violations of the Vietnam and Laos settlement agreements. In the Department of Defense, we are sending copies to Deputy Secretary Clements, Admiral Moorer, General Haig, Admiral de Poix and General Ott.

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George A. Carver, Jr.  
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

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Attachment

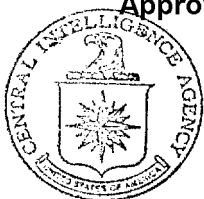
[REDACTED] Copy No. 4

Copy No. 5 - Deputy Secretary Clements  
Copy No. 6 - Admiral Moorer  
Copy No. 7 - General Haig ✓  
Copy No. 8 - Admiral de Poix  
Copy No. 9 - General Ott

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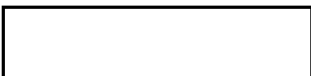
18 April 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable William P. Rogers  
The Secretary of State

SUBJECT : The Balance of Military Forces in Laos

1. Attached for your information is a report on the current status of military forces in Laos, which we prepared for Dr. Kissinger.

2. At Dr. Kissinger's request we are sending copies of this report to the WSAG principals and to the recipients of the weekly CIA/DOD report on Communist violations of the Vietnam and Laos settlement agreements. In the Department of State, we are sending copies to Deputy Secretary Rush, Under Secretary Porter, Deputy Assistant Secretary Sullivan and Mr. Cline.

  
George A. Carver, Jr.  
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment

 Copy No. 10

Copy No. 11 - Deputy Secretary Rush  
Copy No. 16 - Under Secretary Porter  
Copy No. 17 - Deputy Assistant Secretary Sullivan  
Copy No. 18 - Mr. Cline

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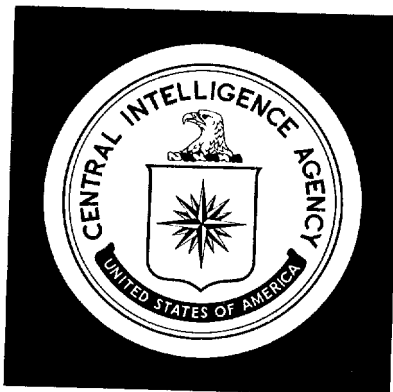
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"The Current Status of Military Forces in Laos"

Copy No. 1 - Dr. Kissinger  
Copy No. 2 - General Scowcroft  
Copy No. 3 - Mr. Kennedy  
Copy No. 4 - SecDef  
Copy No. 5 - DepSecDef  
Copy No. 6 - Chairman, JCS  
Copy No. 7 - Army Vice Chief of Staff  
Copy No. 8 - Director, DIA  
Copy No. 9 - ISA (General Ott)  
Copy No. 10 - SecState  
Copy No. 11 - DepSecState  
Copy No. 16 - Under Secretary (State)  
Copy No. 17 - Deputy Assistant Secretary (Sullivan)  
Copy No. 18 - Mr. Cline (INR)  
  
Copy No. 19 - DCI  
Copy No. 20 - DDCI  
Copy No. 21 - DDO

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# Intelligence Memorandum

*The Current Status of Military Forces in Laos*

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April 1973

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April 1973

## The Current Status of Military Forces in Laos

### Key Judgments

Both the Communists and Royal Lao Government (RLG) forces suffered relatively heavy losses in last year's fighting in Laos. Since then, the Communists have substantially augmented their combat forces, while friendly forces have remained fairly constant.

- At this time, in terms of raw military manpower, neither side enjoys a clear advantage. The Communists have a somewhat larger total force but fewer combat troops than the Royal Lao Government.
- The qualitative advantage, however, clearly lies with the Communists and time is on their side. Perennial problems of poor leadership, inadequate training, and a low degree of motivation continue to plague friendly forces. These problems will be exacerbated by the drawdown of US advisers.
- Further, with Hanoi's impressive commitment of long-range field guns, antiaircraft artillery, and tanks to Laos over the last 18 months (coupled with the elimination of US combat sorties), Communist forces now have a clear firepower advantage over the RLG.
- Both sides are currently in strong logistical positions, but if heavy fighting were to resume, the RLG -- heavily dependent on air resupply -- would encounter serious problems in maintaining its front-line logistical support without outside help.

On balance, then, considering all elements of the military equation -- manpower, logistics, and firepower -- the Communists have the capability to undertake major sustained military activity in either northern or southern Laos in the near future. It seems likely that the RLG would be unable to cope with such an offensive, barring massive outside assistance.

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